

# STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 266

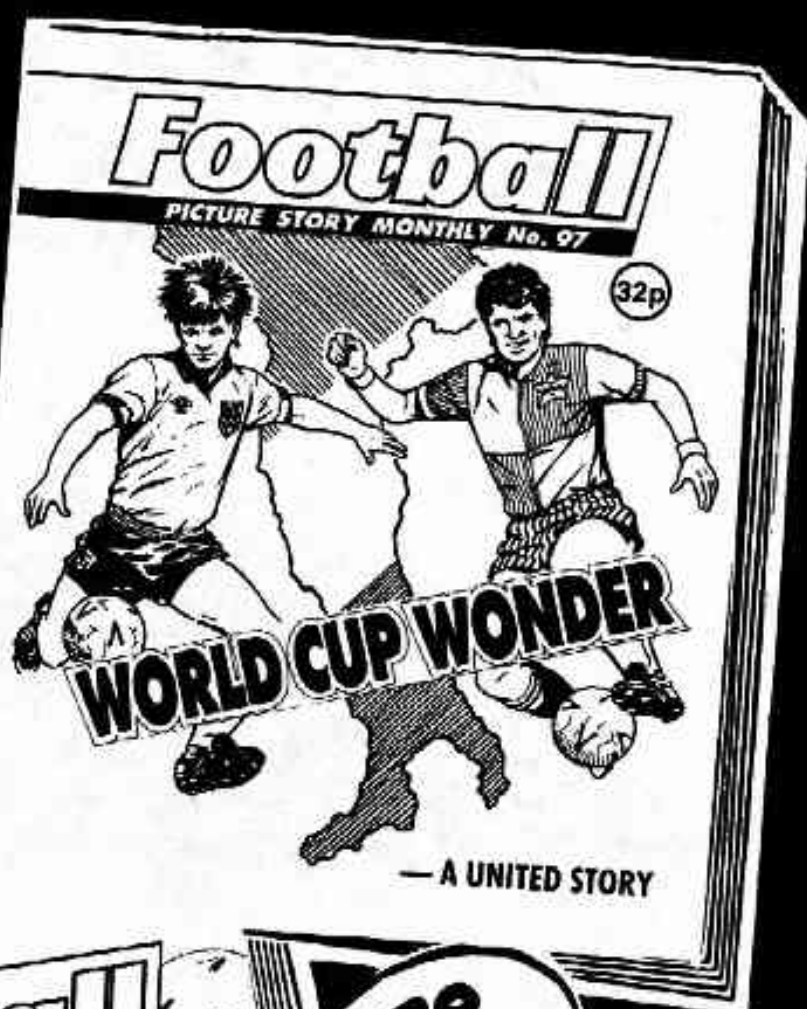
— A KAYN STORY —

32p



# BADLANDS

**IF YOU'RE  
A  
FOOTBALL  
FAN, YOU  
CAN'T  
AFFORD  
TO MISS  
THESE!**




**68  
PAGES  
EACH**

**FOOTBALL  
LIBRARIES  
Nos. 97+98**

**NOW ON SALE 32p**

# BADLANDS

LACK OF FINANCE IS MY CONSTANT PROBLEM. THE NAME MIKAL R. KAYN HAS A POOR CREDIT RATING, AND MY JOB AS A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR IS NO WAY TO BECOME A MILLIONAIRE.



MR KAYN — YOU ARE THREE PAYMENTS IN ARREARS ON YOUR HOVERCAR. DO PLEASE CORRECT THIS OVERSIGHT BEFORE A BREAKAGE OF YOUR LIMBS BY ONE OF OUR ZEALOUS EMPLOYEES. HAVE A NICE DAY.

EVEN MY ANSWERING SERVICE IS OFFENSIVE.



THE OTHER MESSAGE ON MY ANSWERING MACHINE WAS A CLIENT. I MADE AN APPOINTMENT QUICKLY.

THIS PACKAGE HAS TO BE DELIVERED BY A RESPONSIBLE PERSON. I PICKED YOUR NAME FROM THE DIRECTORY OF YOUR TRADE GUILD.

A USEFUL WAY OF ADVERTISING.



5000 CREDITS — THE FEE. FOOLISH PERHAPS TO PAY IN ADVANCE, BUT I FEEL I CAN TRUST YOU, MIKAL — ER, IF I MAY CALL YOU MIKAL.

LADY, THAT KIND OF PAYMENT ENTITLES YOU TO CALL ME WHAT YOU LIKE.





YOUR DESTINATION.

I AM DESTINED FOR THE  
CARETAKER, 90  
POTEMKIN PROSPECT,  
CITY OF GORKISTAN.

OH NO! THAT'S SMACK IN  
THE MIDDLE OF THE  
BADLANDS. LADY, YOU'D  
BETTER FIND ANOTHER  
MESSENGER.

MIKAL, LET US NOT  
HAGGLE. I SHALL  
DOUBLE THE FEE.

LET'S HAGGLE. DOUBLE UP  
AGAIN AND YOU'VE GOT A  
DEAL.

SHE PAID UP WITHOUT BLINKING.

RIGHT, NOW I NEED  
DETAILS FOR MY FILES.  
NAME!

YOU HAVE THE MONEY, AND  
THE PACKAGE — JUST  
DELIVER IT. GOODBYE.

ONE THING I DID KNOW WAS SHE HADN'T LATCHED ONTO ME THROUGH THE DIRECTORY. MY SUBSCRIPTION LAPSED YEARS AGO.



WHY ME? ANY EXPRESS DELIVERY FIRM COULD HANDLE A BADLAND RUN FOR A QUARTER OF WHAT SHE'S PAYING.

I LEARNED SOMETHING AS I WATCHED ON THE SECURITY MONITOR — SHE WAS BEING FOLLOWED.

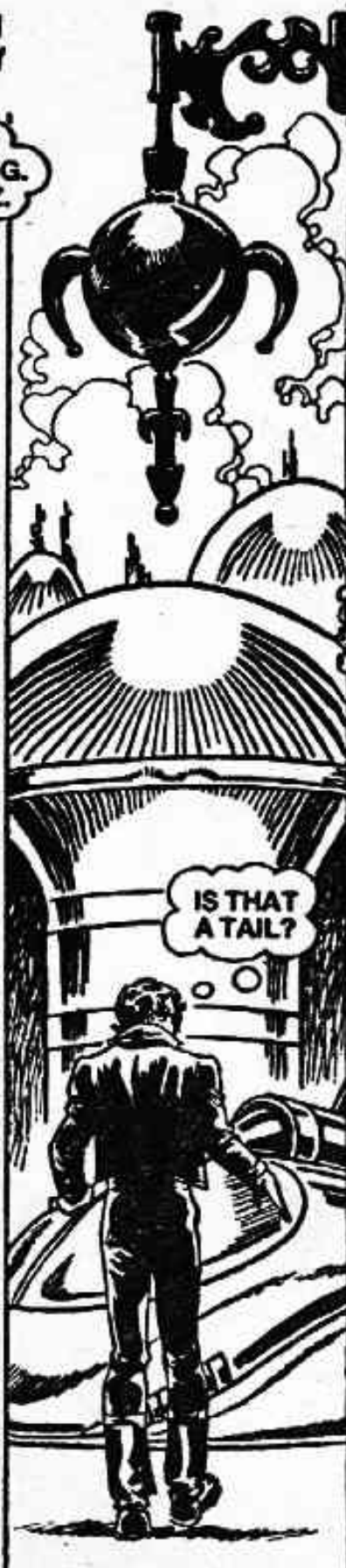




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BUT WHY SHOULD I WORRY? I  
WAS BACK IN CREDIT, WITH MY  
LEGS INTACT.

FIRST I HAVE TO FIND  
OUT WHAT I'M CARRYING.  
BETTER SEE POP PERZ.



I WAS ON MY WAY WHEN I  
BEGAN TO FEEL UNEASY.







ON THE NEW MOSCOW ORBITAL, M25, I  
EXCEEDED THE 35 KLICKS SPEED LIMIT.

I'LL HAVE TO LOSE THE TAIL  
BEFORE I CALL ON POP.



I CUT UP A FREIGHTLINER ON  
A SLIP ROAD —

FOOL! ROADHOG!







POP COULD ... AND DID—



THAT DOES IT,  
I THINK.

THERE WAS NO BANG, SO WE GOT LOOKING—



YES — PROGRAMME CHIPS.  
I'LL TRY ONE.

HE FED IN ONE AND WE WERE  
TREATED TO A LESSON ON VRIGEL-SIX  
COOKERY.



FIRST IS MOST  
NECESSARY TO BE  
DIVESTING PLUMAGE  
FROM KLEPHORK.  
FEATHERS ADD  
NOTHING TO TASTE—

LET'S TRY  
ANOTHER.

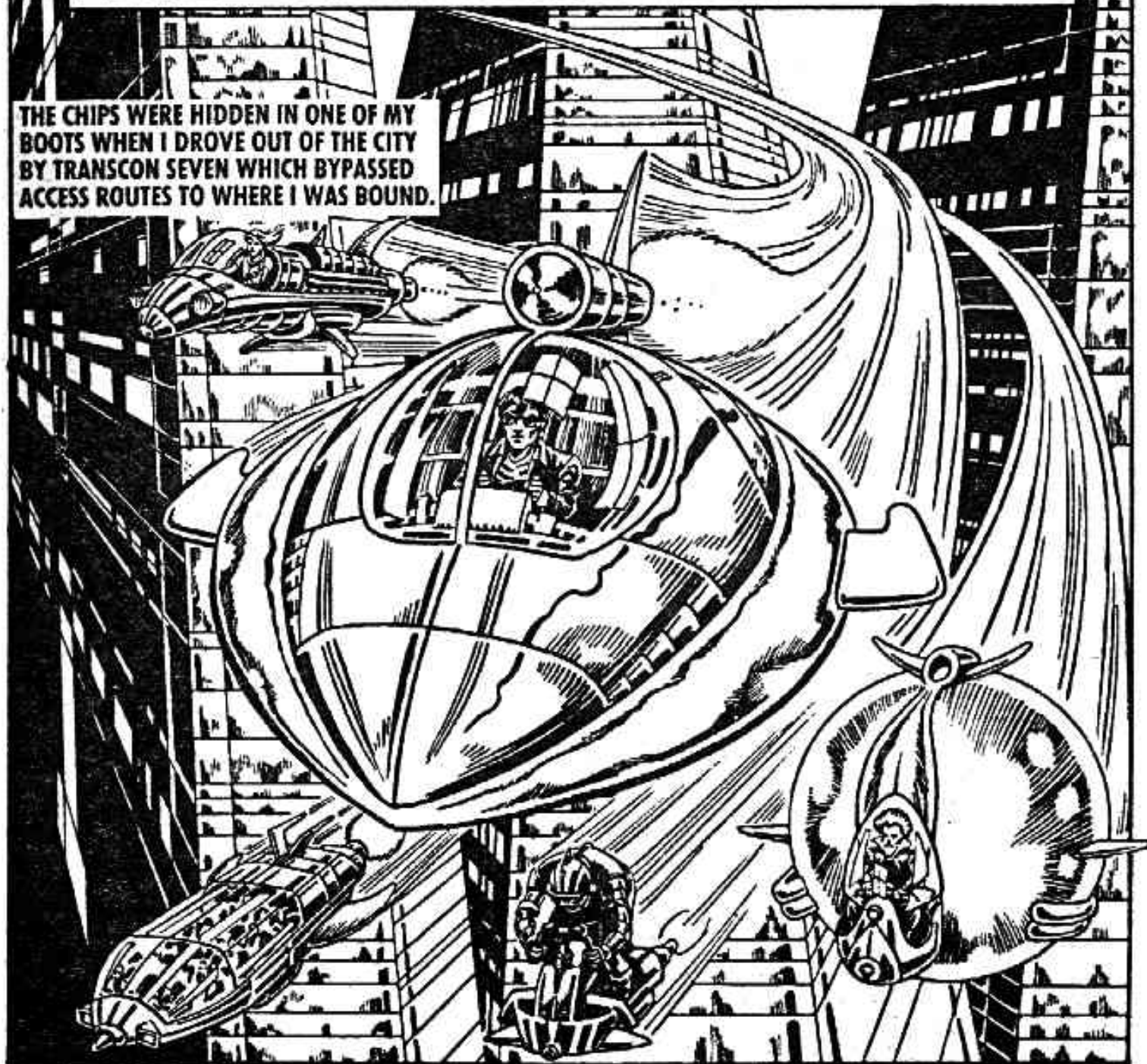


WE TRIED THEM ALL.

SELF-DENTISTRY, HOW TO PLAY  
THE WUGZUL NOSE-FLUTE — JUST  
A JOBLLOT OF VIDEO JUNK. SO WHY  
PAY A SMALL FORTUNE TO DELIVER  
IT INTO THE WILDS?

DON'T ASK ME.  
YOU'RE SUPPOSED  
TO BE THE  
DETECTIVE.

THE CHIPS WERE HIDDEN IN ONE OF MY  
BOOTS WHEN I DROVE OUT OF THE CITY  
BY TRANSCON SEVEN WHICH BYPASSED  
ACCESS ROUTES TO WHERE I WAS BOUND.



WELCOME TO THE LAST  
CHANCE CAFE, FOLKS —  
YOUR LAST CHANCE TO  
COOL OFF BEFORE  
HEADING INTO THE  
HOTSPOTS.

NUTRIENT INTAKE MAY  
NOT BE A BAD NOTION.

I WAS INTAKING WHEN  
THE UNEASY FEELING  
CAME BACK.

THE GENT FROM THE  
PARKING LOT. HE'S ONTO  
ME AGAIN.

I CHECKED THE VEHICLE  
PARK ON THE WAY OUT —

YEP! THAT'S THE HOVCAR THAT  
FOLLOWED ME EARLIER.



I DID A FAST TEN KILOMETRES,  
PULLED INTO COVER — AND  
ALONG THEY CAME.



THAT'S SHAKEN THEM.  
NOW TO MAKE SURE THEY  
STAY SHOOK.

I NEED TO REACH  
GORKISTAN CITY BY THE  
KIND OF WINDING ROUTE  
NO SENSIBLE DRIVER  
WOULD CHOOSE.



BUT CERTAINLY, YOUR NAVLOG  
IS HAPPY TO OBLIGE. WE'LL GO  
THE TOURIST ROUTE.

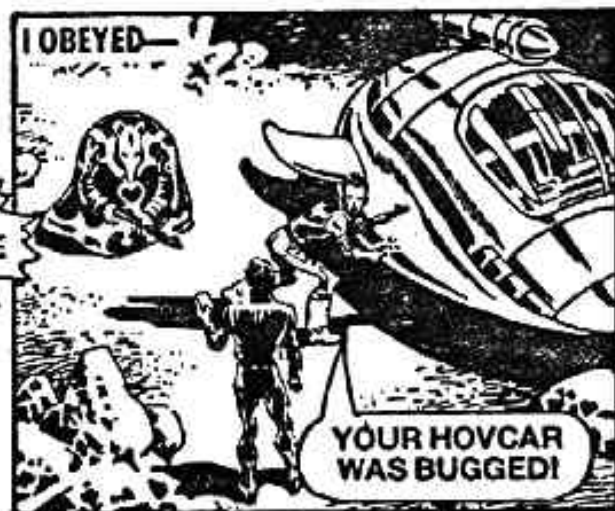


SO ON I WENT INTO GORKISTAN, OTHERWISE THE BADLANDS, NAMED FROM THE PATCHES OF RADIATION LEFT BY THE MELTDOWN OF AN OLD FISSION PLANT BACK IN THE DARK AGES. THE AUTHORITIES TRIED TO COVER THE LEAK UP, BUT THE REFLECTION OF THE SUNS IN THE POLLUTED SKY WAS A DEAD GIVEAWAY.

A QUIET HOUR PASSED AND I BEGAN FEELING QUITE RELAXED, ASLEEP IN FACT.

I BEG YOUR PARDON AND WOULD DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO AN OBSTRUCTION AHEAD.

EH ... WHAT?







THE NEXT INSTANT I WAS HIT WITH A PERSONAL RESTRAINT —  
A GOSSAMER WEB OF A MATERIAL INCAPABLE OF BEING  
STRETCHED. IT'S ALSO VERY SORE.





HEY! ARE YOU GOING TO  
LEAVE ME LIKE THIS?



YOU COULD BE WORSE OFF,  
KAYN — LIKE DEAD.

IT'S EASY TO OPEN THIS  
COMBO-LOCK. MIGHT BE  
AS WELL TO PEEK INSIDE.



TO MAKE SURE THE CHIPS  
ARE THERE BEFORE WE  
TAKE IT TO THE BOSS, EH!

THEY DROVE OFF — ONLY NOT FAR.

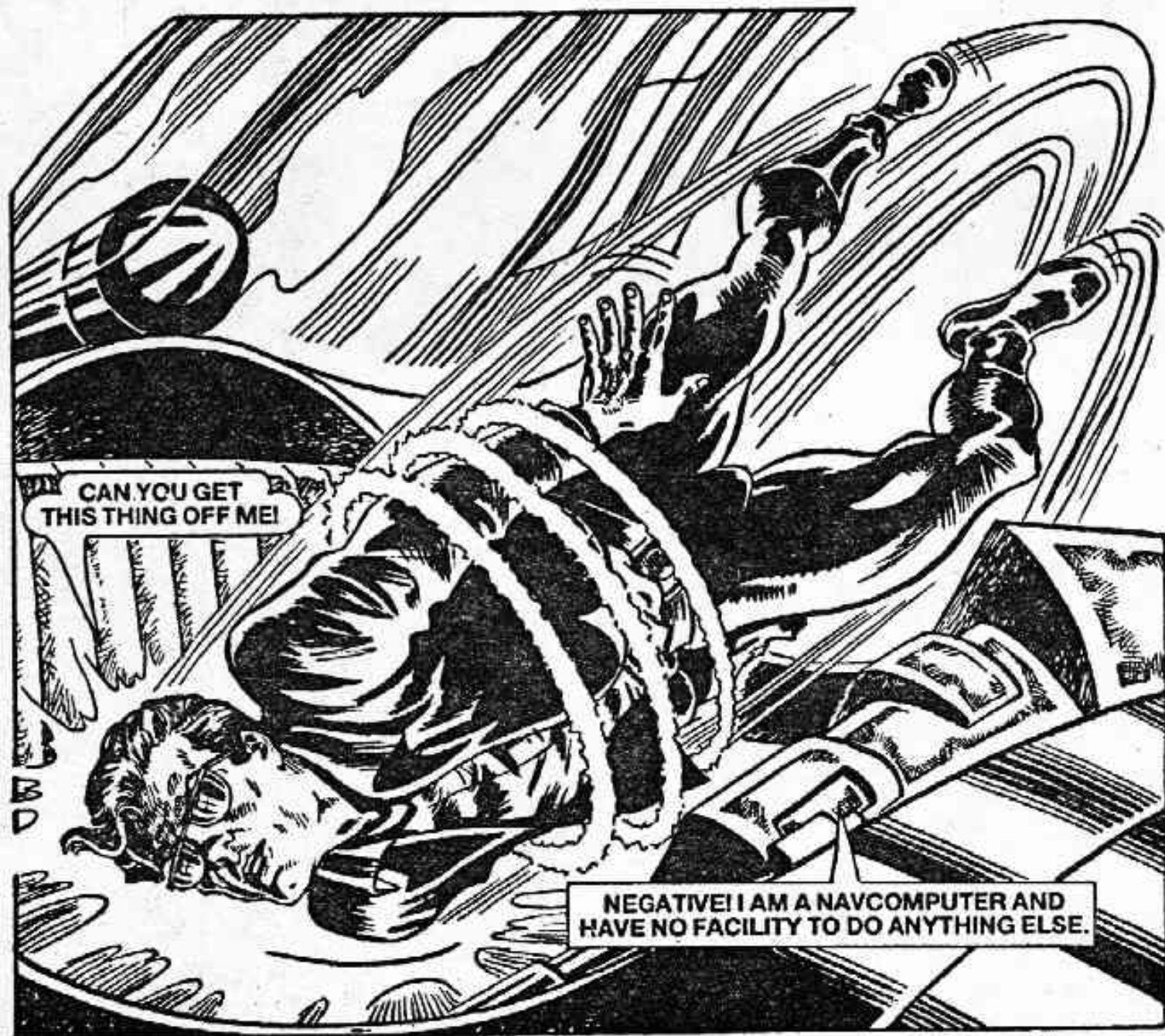
NOSEY DEVILS —  
SERVES THEM RIGHT.



I FELT A RIGHT TWIT WITH THE RESTRAINT ON—

OPEN UP.  
IT'S ME.

YOUR VOICE PATTERN IS  
ACCEPTABLE AS THAT OF  
INDIVIDUAL WHO IS  
PERSONAL OWNER.



CAN YOU GET  
THIS THING OFF ME!

NEGATIVE! I AM A NAVCOMPUTER AND  
HAVE NO FACILITY TO DO ANYTHING ELSE.



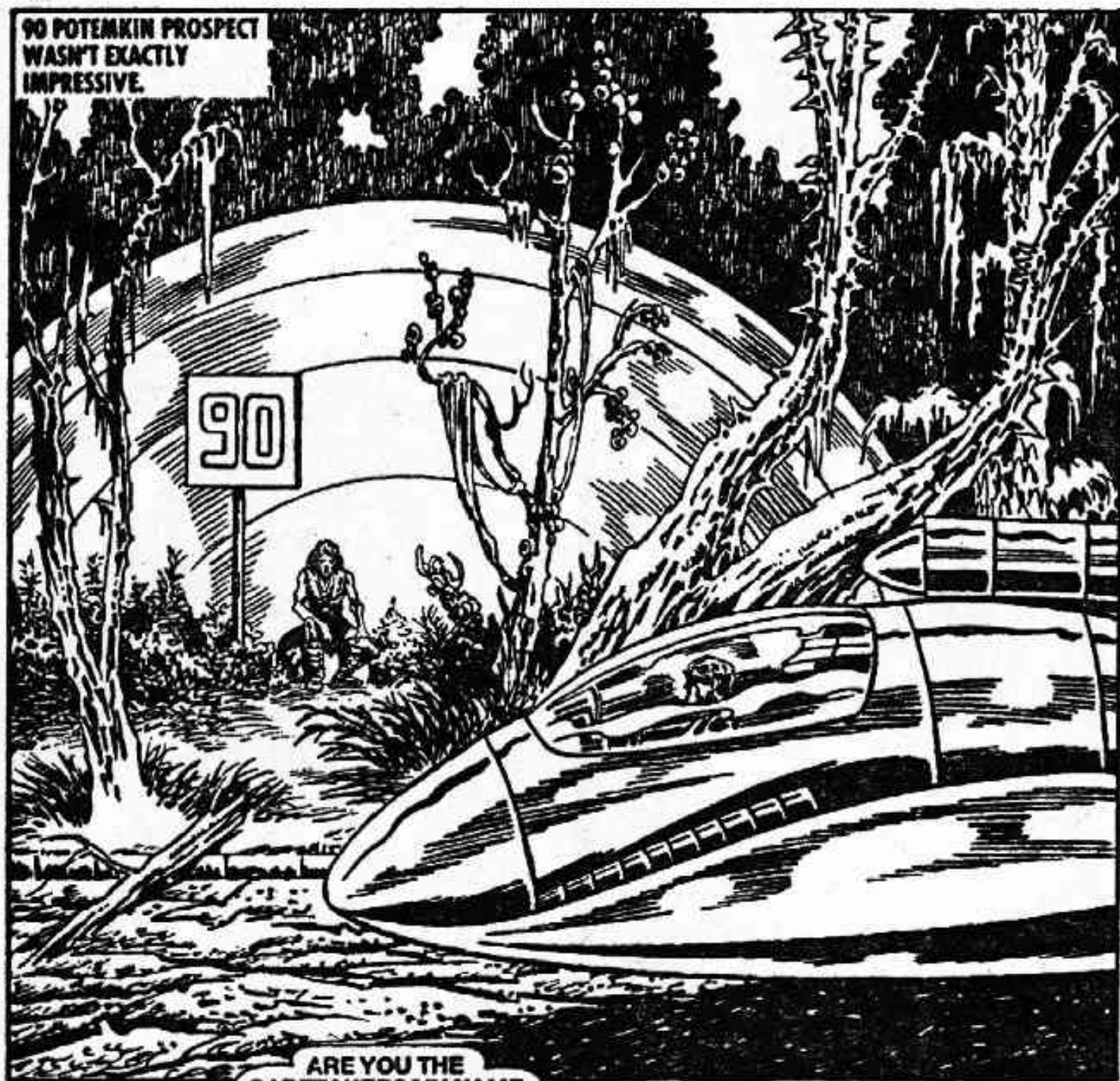
I SETTLED FOR A DRIVE.

GORKISTAN CITY —  
FIVE-ZERO KM. E.T.A.  
TWENTY STANDARD  
MINUTES.

GORKISTAN CITY — NOT THE  
NETHERWORLD TYPE OF CRIMINAL  
REFUGE, MORE A DISPOSAL AREA FOR THE  
SOCIALY MALADJUSTED.



90 POTEMKIN PROSPECT  
WASN'T EXACTLY  
IMPRESSIVE.



ARE YOU THE  
CARETAKER? MY NAME  
IS KAYN AND I'M HERE  
ON A DELIVERY.



YOU ARE EXPECTED! GO  
RIGHT IN.



I WAS WONDERING WHERE TO GO RIGHT  
IN, WHEN 90 POTENKIN OPENED WIDE.



AND THINGS BECAME VERY STRANGE —



WHERE IS  
THE DELIVERY?



THAT'S A  
LONG STORY.

I WAS HUSTLED AWAY, STILL  
IN THE RESTRAINT.

THOSE SICKLE THINGS  
IN YOUR BELTS WOULD  
SOON HAVE ME FREE.

SUCH DECISION IS NOT UP  
TO US. CHAIRPERSON  
OSWALD MUST DECIDE.

90 POTEMKIN WAS MOSTLY  
UNDERGROUND.

WATER FARMING —  
HYDROPONICS. LOOKS  
MORE PRIMITIVE THAN  
THE CULTIVATION WE USED  
IN DEEP SPACE.



THERE WAS NOTHING PRIMITIVE  
ABOUT WHERE I ENDED UP.

NO DELIVERY,  
CHAIRPERSON OSWALD.

JUST GET THIS OFF ME AND  
I'LL TELL YOU THE WHOLE  
STORY.

MISTER KAYN, YOU MOST  
CERTAINLY WILL TELL, BUT  
FIRST A DOSE OF TRUTH-  
INDUCER.



THE MENTAL CONDITIONING OF MY STAR COP DAYS WOULD HAVE ENABLED ME TO RESIST THE JOLT FROM THAT HYPOGUN, BUT I SAW NO NEED AND I LET OUT WITH THE TALE OF MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE EXPLODED PAIR.

MOST ANNOYING, MISTER KAYN. YOU COULD HAVE ALTERED NEW WORLD HISTORY, BUT YOU FAILED. I AM ANNOYED.

OSWALD REALLY WAS ANNOYED.

RAAFFF!



WHY, YOU —

BE SILENT! SHOW RESPECT WHILE THE CHAIRPERSON IS MAKING OUTWORLD TRANSMISSION.



**THE NAMELESS LOVELY  
APPEARED ON THE SCREEN —**

**FEMALE PERSON, YOUR  
COURIER HAS FAILED IN  
DELIVERY. NATURALLY  
THERE WILL BE NO  
RELEASE ON THE BANK  
HOLDING OF THE AGREED  
PRICE.**

**REGRETFUL, BUT ONLY A  
TEMPORARY PROBLEM,  
SIR. I AM SURE MY CLIENT  
WILL AGREE TO AN  
IMMEDIATE CONVEYANCE  
OF FRESH MERCHANDISE.**

**HEY! WHAT  
ABOUT ME?**

**MIKAL, YOUR MISSION IS  
ENDED. YOU ARE NO LONGER  
OF USE TO ME. GOODBYE —  
AND DO HAVE A NICE DAY.**



WELL, GENTLEMEN, YOU  
HEARD THE LADY. JUST FREE  
ME OF THIS WEB WAISTCOAT  
AND I'LL BE ON MY WAY.

I WAS TAKEN BACK THE WAY  
WE'D COME.

NOT POSSIBLE, MISTER  
KAYN. WE ARE A NON-  
VIOLENT, PEACEFUL  
PEOPLE BUT YOU  
KNOW TOO MUCH.

THE OLD METHANE PLANT  
IS A GOOD PLACE. WE CAN  
TAKE HIM IN HIS OWN  
HOVCAR.

THEN BRING IT BACK TO  
BREAK DOWN FOR  
MACHINERY SPARES.

"MY FUTURE SEEMED SETTLED — AND  
SHORT.

GENTLEMEN, I'LL BE  
HONEST WITH YOU. ALL  
THOSE GUYS STOLE IN  
THAT CONTAINER WAS  
A BOOBY-TRAP. I HAVE  
THE PROGRAMME  
CHIPS HIDDEN ON ME.

HE KNOWS THEY WERE  
CHIPS. HE MUST BE  
TELLING THE TRUTH.



THEIR SICKLES SHREDDED THE RESTRAINT IN A FEW SHARP SLASHES.

WHERE ARE THEY?

PATIENCE, BOYS. JUST LET ME EASE THE CRAMPS.

CHAIRPERSON OSWALD WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD GET ANNOYED.

THAT WAS ONE PARTY I WAS HAPPY TO LEAVE.



AH— THE  
CARETAKER!

THEY MAKE HOVCARS OF  
PRETTY SOLID MATERIALS.

COLLISION WITH ONE JAYWALKER IS NOTIFIABLE  
ACCIDENT UNDER CITY ORDINANCE 50411,  
SUBSECTION —

SHUT UP UNLESS YOU WANT TO GET FUSED.



SHOT AT, HIT, NEARLY BLOWN UP AND DUMPED IN A  
METHANE TANK — YES, I THINK THE BLONDE  
BOMBHELL OWES ME AN EXPLANATION AS SOON  
AS I GET BACK.



BUT FIRST I CALLED ON POP PERZ —  
AND HAD A SNARLING RECEPTION.

AHH — GET OFF ME, YOU  
ELECTRONIC MOGGY.

SORRY, KAYN, BUT IT'S  
REALLY YOUR OWN  
FAULT. POOR PUSSKINS  
MUST HAVE GOT A  
FEEDBACK FROM THAT  
COMPUTER YOU  
LOUSED UP.

HUHI WHAT ARE YOU  
TALKING ABOUT?





THE COMPUTER INTO WHICH WE  
FED THE PROGRAMME CHIPS HAD  
BEEN ACTING ODDLY.

CRAZY IN FACT.  
COMPLETELY OUT OF  
CONTROL. LISTEN TO  
THIS.

WHAT IS TWICE TIMES  
TWO?

TWICE TIMES TWICE  
TIMES — OH, FOUR  
TRILLION OR  
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.  
GURLUK! A KLEPHORK  
SHOULD BE WELL  
THAWED IF TAKEN  
FROM DEEP FREEZE.  
KERCHUNK!

POP, COULD THESE  
HAVE ANYTHING TO DO  
WITH THE CHANGING  
OF NEW WORLD  
HISTORY?

WE HAVE HERE A VERY  
SICK COMPUTER. A  
VIRUS, KAYN, AN  
ELECTRONIC  
DISORDER THAT HAS  
SPREAD THROUGH ITS  
ENTIRE SYSTEM — AND  
IT COULD ONLY HAVE  
COME THROUGH  
THOSE PROGRAMME  
CHIPS. DO YOU STILL  
HAVE THEM?

IN MY BOOT.

THEY CERTAINLY COULD!  
OUR CIVILISATION IS  
DEPENDENT ON WHAT  
MIGHT BE TERMED  
MECHANICAL DEFINITION,  
MOST OF THE DEVICES FOR  
WHICH ARE ON LINK BY  
LASER LINE OR RADIO  
WAVE. DAMAGE THE  
SYSTEM AND CIVILISATION  
COMES TO A HALT.



POP FED IN MY DESCRIPTION AND AFTER A LONG SEARCH THE COMPUTER CAME UP WITH A NAME... FRANCES FRAY, BUSINESS NEGOTIATOR.

HARDLY THE LOOK OF A GENIUS, KAYN.

JUST A SMART GIRL EARNING A LIVING. HER CLIENT WILL BE THE GENIUS AND I'LL FIND HIM THROUGH HER.





I BEGAN WITH A CALL AT HER OFFICE ADDRESS.

THE OCCUPANT IS NOT  
AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.  
KINDLY LEAVE YOUR NAME  
AND MESSAGE.



ONE LEGACY OF POLICE WORK IS  
BEING ABLE TO CRACK ANY  
STANDARD SECURITY SYSTEM.



OCCUPANT — GERLIK —  
NOT — NOT ...

FRANCES TURNED OUT TO BE A LADY  
WHO DIDN'T LEAVE CLUES LYING  
AROUND.

SUBMIT CODEWORD TO  
ENTER DATABASE.



POP MIGHT CRACK IT, BUT  
NOT ME. NOW WHAT DETAIL  
DID THE COMPUTER GIVE ON  
HER TRANSPORT?

I FOUND HER SMART LITTLE HOVERCAR IN THE OFFICE BLOCK COMPOUND AND MADE MORE USE OF MY SERVICE MEMORIES.

YOU ARE ADVISED TO GIVE VOICEPRINT I.D. ... VOICE ... CLAKLAK ...

A NAVLOG COPY OF RECENT TRIPS MIGHT COME IN USEFUL.







THERE WERE TWO OF THEM —



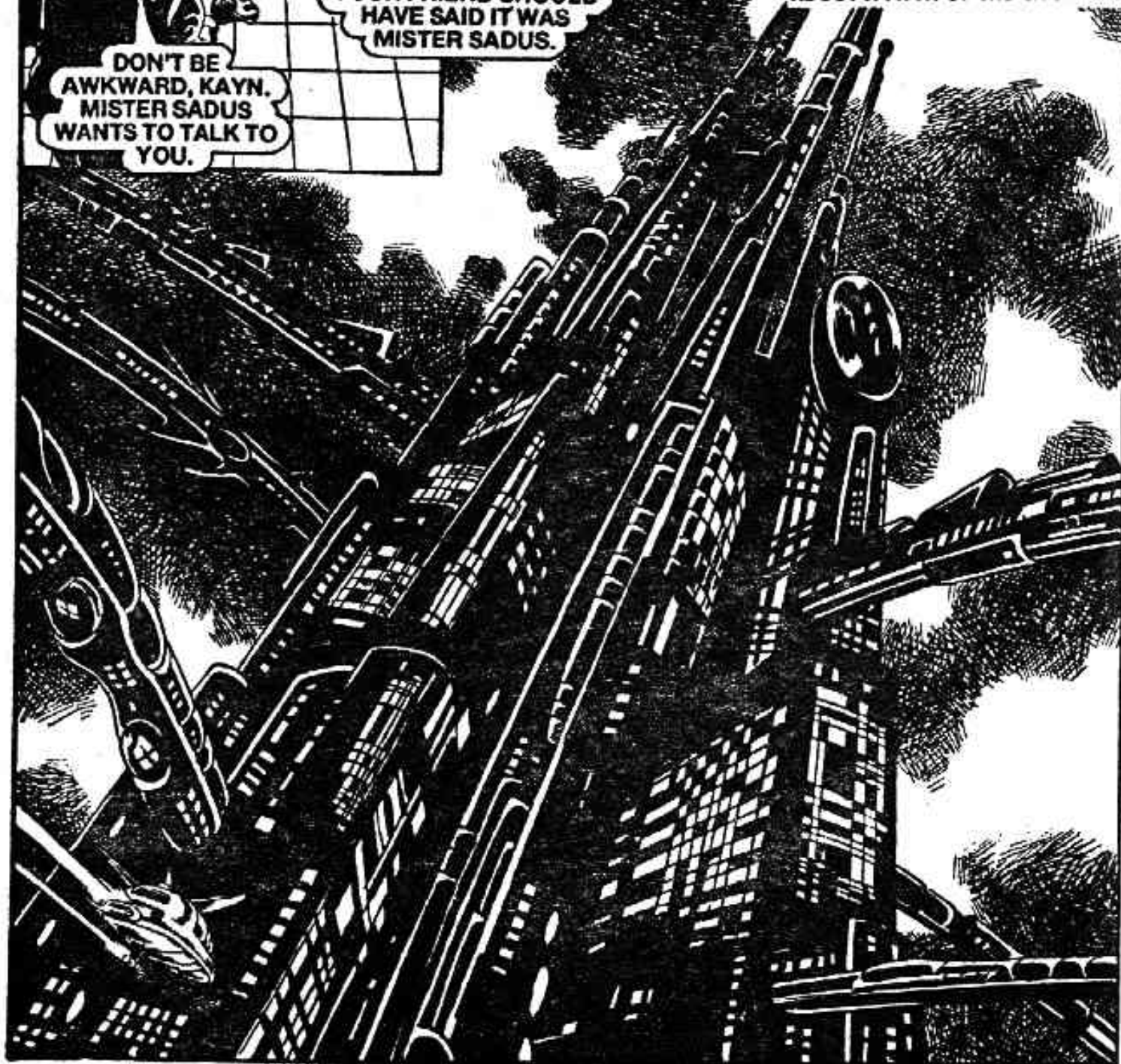
THAT'S DIFFERENT.  
YOUR FRIEND SHOULD  
HAVE SAID IT WAS  
MISTER SADUS.

DON'T BE  
AWKWARD, KAYN.  
MISTER SADUS  
WANTS TO TALK TO  
YOU.

AN INVITE FROM JAK SADUS WAS NOT TO BE REFUSED — NOT IF  
THE INVITEE WISHED TO STAY VERTICAL AND BREATHING.



THE SADUS RESIDENCE WAS ON  
TOP OF A TOWER BLOCK WHICH  
HE OWNED — HE OWNED  
ABOUT A FIFTH OF THE CITY.







KAYN, TWO OF MY OPERATIVES  
WERE VAPORIZED EARLIER  
TODAY. I THINK YOU HAD A PART  
IN IT, BUT I AM NOT ONE TO HOLD  
A GRUDGE.

THAT'S NICE! AFTER ALL  
YOU DO HAVE LOTS MORE  
OF THEM.

NO NEED FOR THE  
HYPOGUN. KAYN IS  
TOO SMART TO LIE  
TO ME.

QUITE RIGHT. I  
SUPPOSE YOU WANT  
TO KNOW WHAT  
HAPPENED AFTER  
YOUR BOOBY-TRAPPED  
CONTAINER BLEW UP?

I EXPLAINED ...  
AND SO DID HE.

KAYN, I HAVE DECIDED TO  
HIRE YOU TO PREVENT THIS  
THREAT TO SOCIETY. YOU  
WILL BE PAID DOUBLE YOUR  
USUAL RATES AND A  
GENERAL BONUS ON A  
SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION.

YOU WERE MEANT TO  
DELIVER TO THE OSWALD  
COMMUNE. BUNCH OF  
FREAKS WHO WANT TO  
DESTROY CIVILISATION IN  
ORDER TO REPLACE IT  
WITH THEIR OWN VERSION  
OF LIVING. CANNOT BE  
ALLOWED, KAYN. THERE IS  
NO PROFIT IN CHAOS.

ESPECIALLY FOR CROOKS.  
HOW CAN YOUR  
HARDWORKING CRIMINAL  
FUNCTION WITHOUT LAW  
AND ORDER?

HIGH PAY FOR WHAT I WAS  
GOING TO DO ANYWAY — ONLY  
THE THOUGHT OF WORKING FOR JAK  
SADUS GAVE ME AN ITCHY FEELING.

LATEST REPORT ON THE  
FEMPSON FRANCES FRAY.  
WITHIN THE LAST HOUR SHE  
VISITED HER OFFICE AND  
DEPARTED ALMOST  
IMMEDIATELY IN HER HOVCAR.  
SHORTLY THEREAFTER SHE  
VANISHED AFTER LOSING THE  
SURVEILLANCE UNIT DETAILED  
TO FOLLOW.

AN ELUSIVE LADY.  
WELL, KAYN, WHAT ARE  
YOU WAITING FOR?



A CALL ON POP PERZ SEEMED INDICATED.

I CAN'T GET OUR ELECTRONIC FELINE BACK TO NORMAL. THOSE VIRUS CHIPS BAFFLE EVEN ME. THEY HOLD SOME FORM OF PARTICLE THAT ABSORBS AND DISTORTS ALL PROGRAMMING WITH WHICH IT COMES INTO CONTACT.

SOUNDS FASCINATING, BUT WOULD YOU MIND LEAVING THAT ELECTRONIC MOGGY AND DOING A JOB FOR ME?

POP FED MISS FRAY'S NAVLOG INTO A HEALTHY UNIT.

THIS DATABASE IS PROTECTED BY A CODEWORD.

ONE OF THOSE, EH! THIS MIGHT TAKE A MINUTE OR TWO.

ENTRY TOOK POP ONE AND A QUARTER MINUTES PRECISELY.

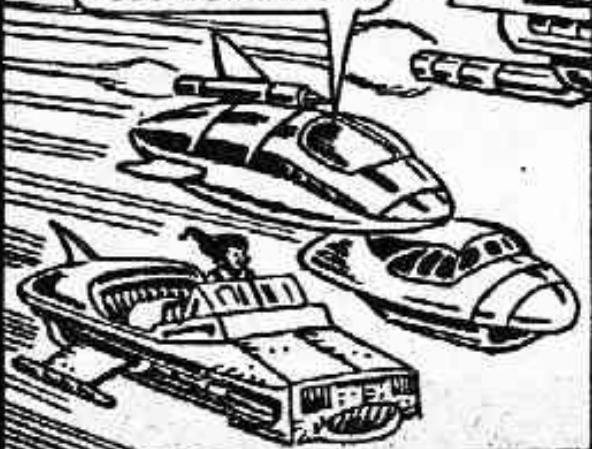
THREE PLACES OF REGULAR VISITATION. TWO ARE OFFICE AND HOME ADDRESS, THE THIRD A DOWNTOWN AREA OF THE CITY.

LET'S HAVE A BLOW-UP ON THE LAST.

**WATERSIDE, A PLEASANT SUBURB BEFORE DEVELOPMENT TURNED THE NEW MOSCOW RIVER INTO PART OF THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM.**



**ONLY BUSINESS COULD DRAW A BUSINESS GIRL LIKE MISS FRAY INTO A SLUM LIKE THAT.**



**HER HOVCARI SHE'S HERE AGAIN.**





I HID MY HOVCAR A  
SHORT WAY OFF —  
AND GOT OUT TO A  
PROBLEM.

HI, PILGRIM! TEN  
CREDITS IF YOU WANT  
YOUR JALOPY LOOKED  
AFTER TILL YOU COME  
BACK FOR IT.

I PAID, AND ASKED IF  
THEY'D SEEN MISS FRAY.

SHE COMES HERE  
OFTEN, PILGRIM.  
FIFTY CREDITS AND  
I'LL TAKE YOU TO  
WHERE SHE IS  
RIGHT NOW.

THIS WAY,  
PILGRIM.

JUST AS WELL I HAD EYES  
IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD.

AHHH!







SO WE MADE ANOTHER DEAL.

THE LOWER TUNNEL WILL  
TAKE YOU TO HER IN ONE  
OF THE OLD STORAGE  
UNITS OVER THE RIVER —  
AND THAT'S GOING TO  
COST YOU TWO HUNDRED  
CREDITS.

YOU'LL GET IT WHEN I  
COME BACK — IF YOU'RE  
RIGHT AND IF MY HOVCAR  
IS STILL WHERE I LEFT IT.

I WENT ON ALONE.







**PHEW — CLOSE! THAT'S  
THE RIVER CANYON.**

**DARKNESS DOESN'T BOTHER  
ME WHEN I TAKE OFF THE  
LENSES NEEDED TO CORRECT  
THE EXPLOSION DAMAGE THAT  
REDUCES MY VISION TO LIGHT  
WAVES ABOUT 7000  
ANGSTROM — WHICH MEANS  
I SEE BY INFRA-RED.**



WHICH IS USEFUL FOR  
DETECTING SOME TYPES  
OF SECURITY SYSTEM.



THE ALARM FIELD  
ENDED AT AN OPENING  
OFF THE LEDGE.

A VOICE — FOOTSTEPS!  
SOMEBODY'S COMING.







I WAS ABOUT TO START AFTER THAT ELUSIVE FEMPERSON WHEN I HEARD THE VOICE.


DON'T LEAVE ME  
— PLEASE.

I WAS DRAWN BY THAT TONE OF  
PLEADING AND FEAR.

YOU ARE BACK, FEMPERSON. I  
KNEW YOU WOULD NOT REALLY  
ABANDON ME TO PERISH.







SHE INTENDS TO DELIVER A COMPUTER VIRUS TO A HIGH PAYER. I OBJECTED AND SHE DEALT WITH ME AS YOU SEE. SIR, I MUST WARN YOU THAT DEVICE WILL DETONATE IN TEN MINUTES FROM HER TIME OF DEPARTURE.

COMPUTER VIRUSES ... SO THAT'S IT! LET'S SEE WHAT THIS LITTLE BOX HAS TO SAY FOR ITSELF.



THE RESULT WAS NOT WHAT I EXPECTED.

KINDLY GIVE THE CODEWORD OR EXPLOSION WILL OCCUR IN TWO-POINT-FIVE STANDARD MINUTES.

PROFESSOR, WHAT IS THE CODEWORD?





I DON'T KNOW THE  
CODEWORD. ONLY THAT  
CONNIVING FEMPERSON  
KNOWS.


IT WAS TIME FOR PROMPT ACTION.





A man in a suit and glasses is crawling on the floor, looking back over his shoulder with a desperate expression. The background is dark with a dense, cross-hatched texture. A speech bubble above him contains the text: "PHEW! NEXT TIME I'LL THINK BEFORE I DO ANYTHING."

PHEW! NEXT TIME I'LL  
THINK BEFORE I DO  
ANYTHING.

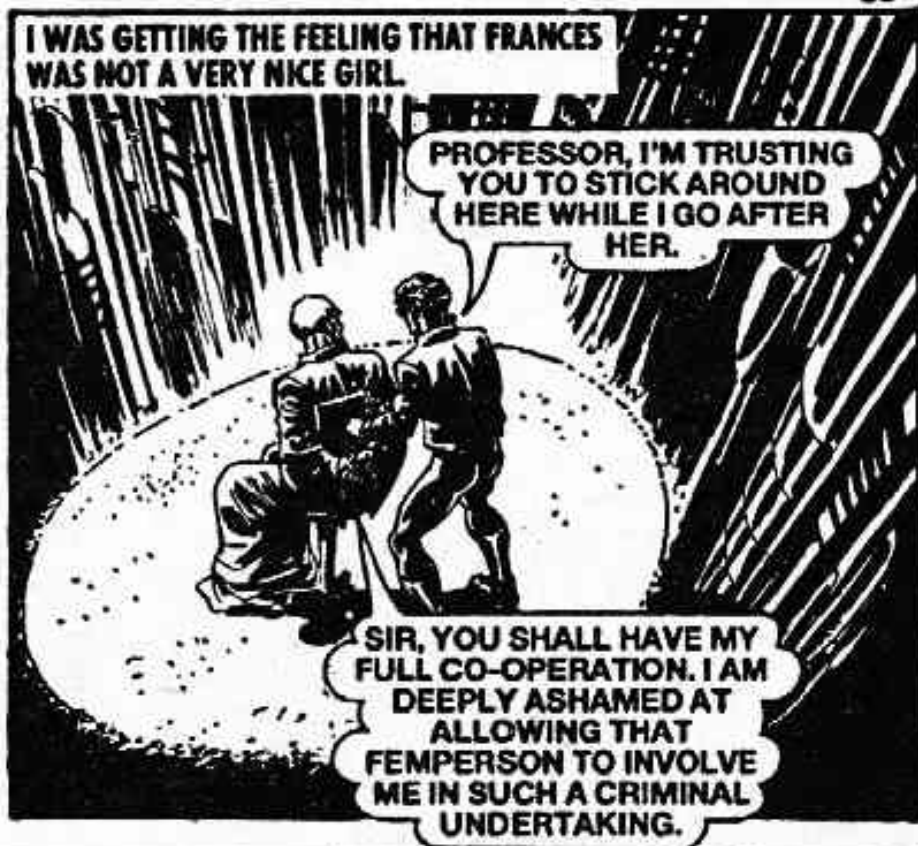


Two men are shown in a conversation. The man on the left is wearing a suit and glasses, looking serious. The man on the right is older, with a balding head, looking towards the first man. The background is a dark, textured pattern. Two speech bubbles are present: one from the man on the left and one from the man on the right.

PROFESSOR, I WANT  
ANSWERS. WHY WOULD A  
SMART GIRL LIKE FRANCES  
FRAY HELP A WEIRDO  
BUNCH TO WRECK  
SOCIETY?

SUCH MADNESS IS NOT  
WHAT SHE INTENDS.  
SHE WILL SELL THE  
MALADY AND THEN  
MEANS OF CURING IT.





NICE GIRLS DO NOT  
GENERALLY HAVE  
LETHAL DESTRUCTORS  
TUCKED AWAY ON  
THEIR PERSONS.

FIRE SERVICES ARE  
INVESTIGATING AN  
EXPLOSION IN THE  
WATERSIDE SECTION  
SUSPECTED DUE TO  
SPONTANEOUS  
COMBUSTION OF  
INFLAMMABLE VAPOUR.



FRANCES WILL  
THINK SHE'S SAFE  
IF SHE HEARS THAT.



I MADE SPEED INTO THE BADLANDS.

THE LAST CHANCE, FOLKS  
— YOUR LAST CHANCE TO  
COOL OFF —

I MADE GORKISTAN CITY  
BY THE QUICKEST ROUTE.



SMARTER TO GO IN  
A FOOT THE LAST  
COUPLE OF  
BLOCKS.

I WALKED INTO ANOTHER CLUE AT 90  
POTEMKIN PROSPECT."



NOW WHY WOULD SHE  
BLAST THE CARETAKER  
WHEN CALLING ON A  
CUSTOMER?

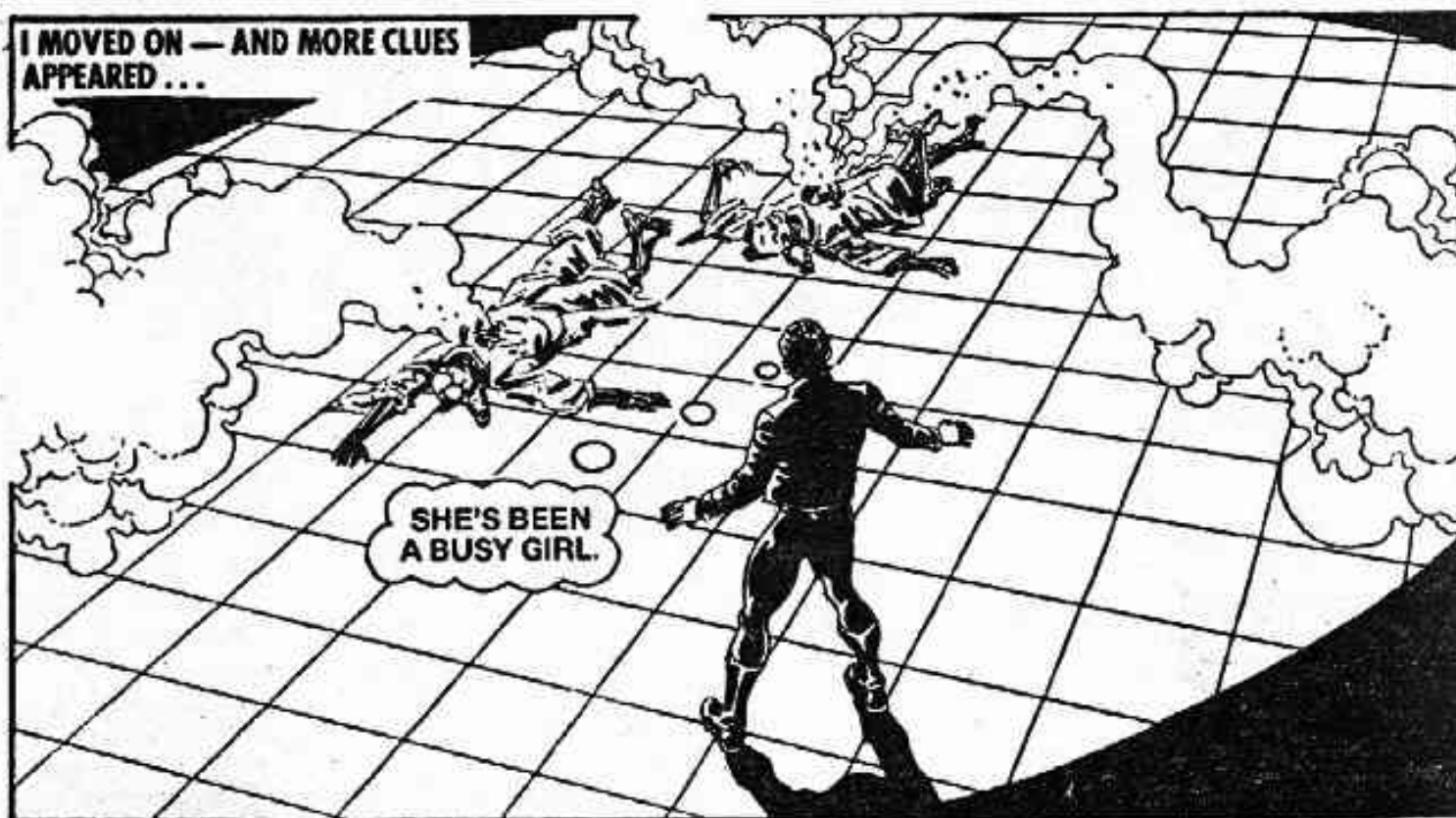
HER HOVCAR WAS PARKED BY SOME VEHICLES THAT HADN'T BEEN THERE ON MY LAST VISIT.



I USED MY POLICE TRAINING FOR ANOTHER OPENING JOB.



I MOVED ON — AND MORE CLUES APPEARED ...









IT WAS ALMOST A SURPRISE TO COME  
ON SOMEBODY STILL MOBILE —  
SOMEBODY I RECOGNISED.



I MOVED ON TO THE DISCOVERY OF JAK IN  
PERSON — ALONG WITH MORE OF HIS BOYS,  
CHAIRPERSON OSWALD AND MISS FRANCES FRAY.



I CANNOT ALLOW THE SOCIAL CHAOS THAT WOULD FOLLOW FROM THE SALE TO THESE WEIRDOES OF THE COMPUTER BUG.



MY NEXT CALL WOULD HAVE BEEN ON YOU TO DISCUSS PURCHASE OF THE ANTIDOTE.



ANTIDOTE! YOU MEAN THE VIRUS CAN BE CURED?

COMPLETE HEALING, SIR — AND IT COULD BE UNDER YOUR CONTROL. THINK OF THE POWER YOU WOULD HAVE.



I HAD TO ADMIRE HER SKILL AT A SALES PITCH.

FIVE MILLION! A MODEST PRICE FOR WHAT YOU BUY. YOU WOULD HAVE A BLACKMAIL POWER WORTH BILLIONS.



CHAIRPERSON OSWALD DIDN'T  
SEEM TO APPROVE.

ANTIDOTE! YOU SAID  
NOTHING OF AN  
ANTIDOTE. YOU WOULD  
HAVE CHEATED US.



MISS FRAY WAS CERTAINLY A FAST LADY.



WHICH WAS WHEN I WAS  
DISTRACTED BY A PROBLEM  
OF MY OWN.

HEY, YOU! WHAT  
YOU DOING HERE?

OH! SPECTATING!

EURGH!



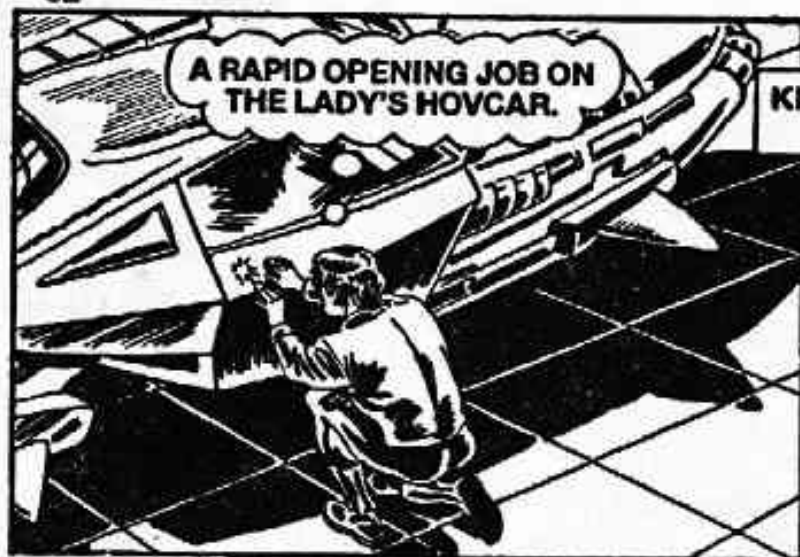


IT SEEMED A GOOD TIME TO DEPART.



I HITCHED A RIDE ON THE TRACKWAY.





I SET THE LOCKS ON THE ANTIDOTE CONTAINERS.

KINDLY STATE TIME-LAG BEFORE I EXPLODE.



I LOCKED THE HOVCAR AND HEADED FOR THE SURFACE WHEN THE OWNER APPEARED.

MIKALI! YOU KNOW TOO MUCH.







SHE CAME SHOOTING.

YOU WILL NOT  
ESCAPE ME, MIKAL.



I DID...

'BYEEEE!





LOOKS LIKE YOU LOSE BOTH  
VIRUS AND ANTIDOTE, MISTER  
SADUS.

AT LEAST CIVILISATION  
AS WE KNOW IT IS SAFE,  
MISTER KAYN. I SHALL  
REMEMBER YOU IF  
EVER I NEED A  
RELIABLE SNOOP.

AT LAST I'D DONE A JOB  
AND MADE CRED. A LOT OF  
CRED. MAYBE I'D GET  
OUT.

PROFESSOR EFRIM FLOOX MOVED IN FOR  
A TIME WITH POP PERZ AND THEY GOT  
ALONG JUST FINE.

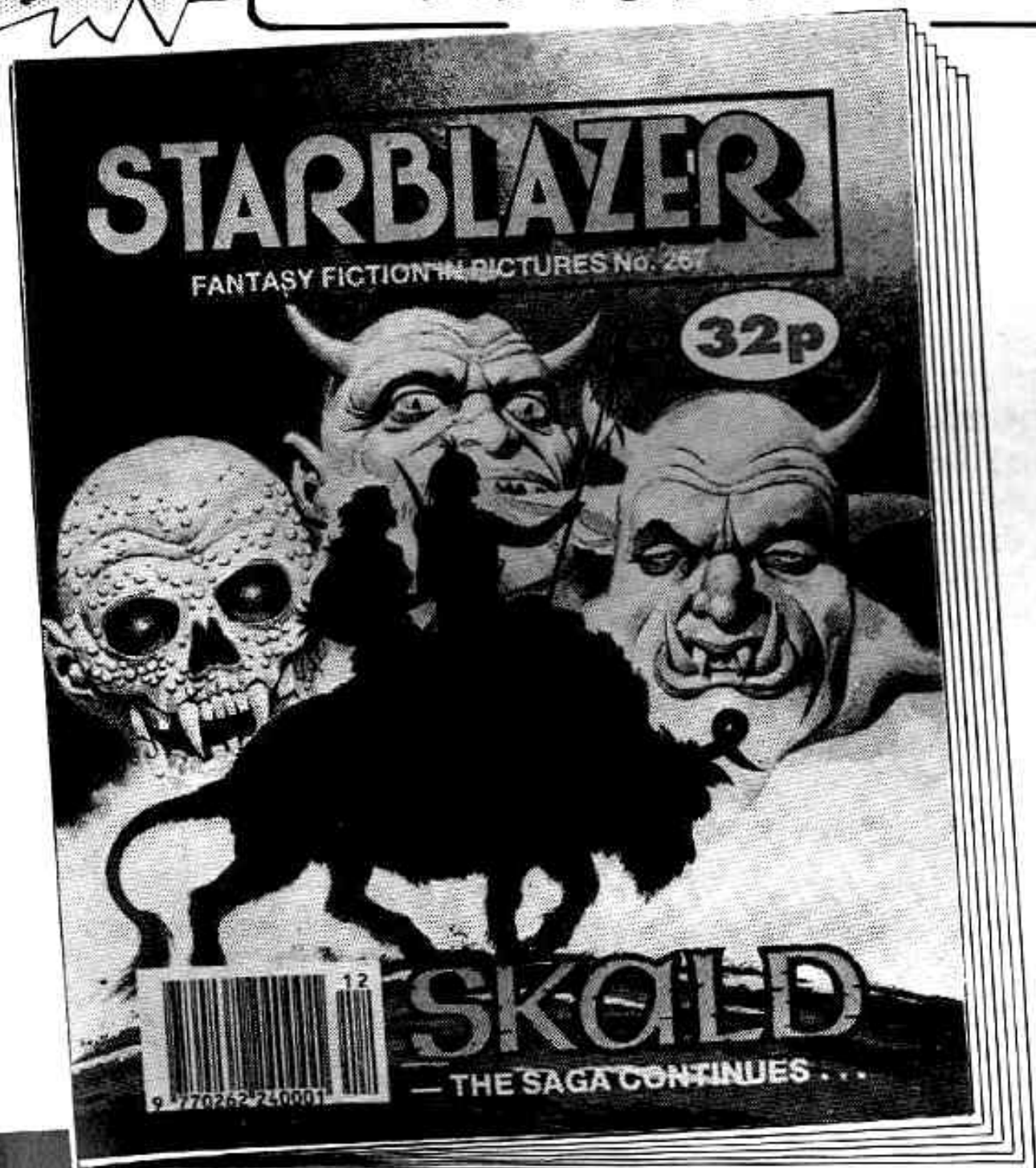
INTEGRATION OF ANTIDOTE  
PROGRAMMING COMPLETE.  
SUBJECT WILL NOW REVERT TO  
FORMER DOCILE STATUS.





**DON'T  
MISS**

**THIS MONTH'S OTHER  
ACTION-PACKED  
ADVENTURE**



**NOW ON SALE**



# BADLANDS

**Broke, short of credits, financially embarrassed — that was me. Me being Mikal R. Kayn, private investigator and financially embarrassed being the understatement of the year. I needed a case, any case, as long as it paid creds on the nail. And when this gorgeous blonde offered me a delivery job and let me name my own price, I thought all my dreams had come true. Wrong! For dreams substitute nightmares.**

